DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BRANCH OF THE COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE AND DAIRYING

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

OF THE

MACDONALD-ROBERTSON SEED GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

BY

JAS. W. ROBERTSON

Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying.

BULLETIN No. 10 - NEW SERIES

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OTTAWA, March 28, 1903.

To the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture.

SIR, I beg to transmit herewith a Bulletin containing the announcement of the Macdonald-Robertson Seed Growers' Association. I think the information which it presents will be of great benefit to the farmers of Canada. I recommend that it be printed for distribution.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

JAS. W. ROBERTSON,

Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying.

DOMINION OF CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Branch of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

OF THE

MACDONALD-ROBERTSON SEED GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

By JAS. W. ROBERTSON,

Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying.

With a view to encouraging further the production and general use of seed of superior quality for farm crops, the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture for Canada has authorized me to announce that the Department of Agriculture will grant such assistance as may be necessary to enable an association or associations of producers of improved and registered seed to carry on effective work.

In all kinds of farm crops the yield per acre may be materially increased and the quality substantially improved by the use of seed which has been graded up by careful growing and systematic, intelligent selection, continued without interruption from year to year.

The qualities known as vigour of growth and productiveness in individual plants, are transmitted through their seeds to the succeeding crops quite as surely as any desirable characteristics are transmitted to animals from their ancestors.

All seed for general use should be obtained from varieties of which the quality has a relatively good market value, from crops which have attained a high degree of productiveness, and from localities where the climatic conditions are not much different from those where the seed is to be used.

All farms and all kinds and conditions of soils are not well adapted for the production of seed of superior quality, of all kinds of crops. Grain, and other seeds, for seed purposes, should be produced on lands that are free from noxious weeds and capable of producing those crops at their best in quality and in yield per plant.

There is a need and opportunity in every agricultural locality in Canada for a few farmers to make a specialty of growing high-class seed in quantity for the purposes of seed as distinguished from grain for feed or food. There would be immediate profit to all growers who managed that special branch of farming with care and intelligence. Other farmers would seek from them the supplies of seed for their general farm crops.

The best results for all concerned are to be obtained from organized effort, under intelligent direction. Associations of farmers making a specialty of growing grain and other crops for seed purposes on well kept and highly conditioned farms, should be organized as a means of improving their seed and of educating buyers and farmers generally on the value of pure-bred registered seed.

I. Some four hundred and fifty of the parents of competitors who have been operating plots in the Macdonald Seed Grain Competition have expressed their intention of continuing the work of producing pure-bred seed by hand selection. They with others who may join us, will become the original members of the Macdonald-Robertson Seed Growers' Association for the Dominion of Canada.

I desire that seed growers who have given special attention to the production of wheat, oats, barley, rye and corn during the past few years should also become operating members of this association and make provision for operating a seed plot.

II. The object of the Association will be to advance the interests of seed growers,

(1.) By forming regulations as to methods;

(2.) By publishing information as to standards;

(3.) By issuing certificates of registration which will distinguish between hand selected pure-bred seed and ordinary grain; and

(4.) By such other means as may become expedient from time to time.

Provisional directors of the Association are to be called together at some future time to consider and revise the rules and regulations which have been drafted for the guidance of those who operate seed plots in 1903. Arrangements may also be made for the formation of district and local associations in the various provinces.

III. The Macdonald-Robertson Seed Growers' Association for the Dominion shall consist of honorary and operating members.

(2.) Persons who may be engaged in agricultural research work, or who may be otherwise interested in the progress of agriculture, may be admitted as honorary members. When appointed or elected as honorary members of the Association, they will be eligible to any office, and enjoy the same rights and powers as operating members.

(3.) To be eligible as an operating member the applicant must be a producer of improved seed, and must each year conduct a hand-selected seed plot, consisting of not less than one quarter acre of land.

IV. By the term 'hand-selected seed plot of the first year,' is meant a piece of land bearing a crop produced direct from seed obtained by selection, by hand, of the heads or ears from plants appearing relatively large and vigorous for the variety.

(2.) By the term 'hand-selected seed plot of the second year,' is meant a piece of land bearing a crop produced direct from seed obtained by selection, by hand, of the heads or ears from plants appearing relatively large and vigorous for the variety, on a hand-selected seed plot of the first year.

(3.) By the term 'hand-selected seed plot of the third year,' is meant a piece of land bearing a crop produced direct from seed obtained by selection, by hand, of the heads or ears from plants appearing relatively large and vigorous for the variety, on a hand-selected seed plot of the second year.

V. It is permissible to select heads in sufficient quantity to sow a hand-selected seed plot or plots of a total area not greater than four times the size of the plot from which they were selected.

VI. To entitle the seeds of wheat, oats, barley or rye to be eligible for registration by the Macdonald-Robertson Seed Growers' Association, they must be produced on a well-cultivated registered seed plot from a crop that has followed in rotation.

(1.) After clover, pease, beans, or some other leguminous crop; or

(2.) After a cultivated crop, such as Indian corn, turnips, mangels, carrots, beets or potatoes; or

(3.) After a summer fallow.

VII. There will be three distinct classes of registration for seeds.

(2.) In the pure-bred class there will be registered as 'pure-bred registered seed' only seed obtained from heads selected by hand from the plants relatively the largest and most vigorous on a registered hand-selected seed plot of at least the third year. The registration certificate of 'pure-bred registered seed' will show the number of years of antecedent selection, as for instance 'pure-bred registered seed of the fourth year' or of the tenth year as the case may be. Such seed will be suitable for use on hand-selected seed plots to produce 'improved registered seed.'

(3.) In the improved class there will be registered as 'improved registered seed' only grain obtained from a crop produced from pure-bred registered seed. The registration certificate of improved registered seed will show the number of years of antecedent selection of the crop from which it was obtained, as for instance, 'improved registered seed from a crop of the third year,' or of the tenth year as the case may be. Such seed will be suitable for use on improved seed plots to produce 'general crop registered seed.'

(4.) In the general crop class there will be registered as 'general crop registered seed' only seed obtained from a crop produced from improved registered seed. Such seed will be suitable for use for the general crop of the farm, and the product from it will not be eligible for registration.

The diagram at the end of this announcement will help to make clear the system of selection and registration.

VIII. Records will be kept on which will be entered,—

(1.) The names and addresses of the members of the Association or Associations;

(2.) The size of the hand-selected seed plot of each operating member;

(3.) The size of the improved seed plot of each operating member;

(4.) The yield per acre of each registered plot; and

(5.) The disposal of the seed from each registered plot where certificates of registration are issued.

IX. The Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying will in the meantime control the issuing of all certificates of registration of seed plots and seed, and take such steps by way of inspection, supervision of the operation of seed plots, and otherwise, as shall safeguard the certificates from being used fraudulently or in any manner contrary to the regulations or to the interests of the members of the Association or those engaged in the production of pure-bred registered seed.

X. In the production of registered seed it is recommended that the hand-selected seed plots and the improved seed plots be sown much thinner than has been the common practice in the locality. The thin sowing will to a great extent give individual plants an opportunity to stool or tiller. The aim should be to obtain a maximum of vigour and of yield per plant rather than a maximum of bushels per acre on the seed plots.

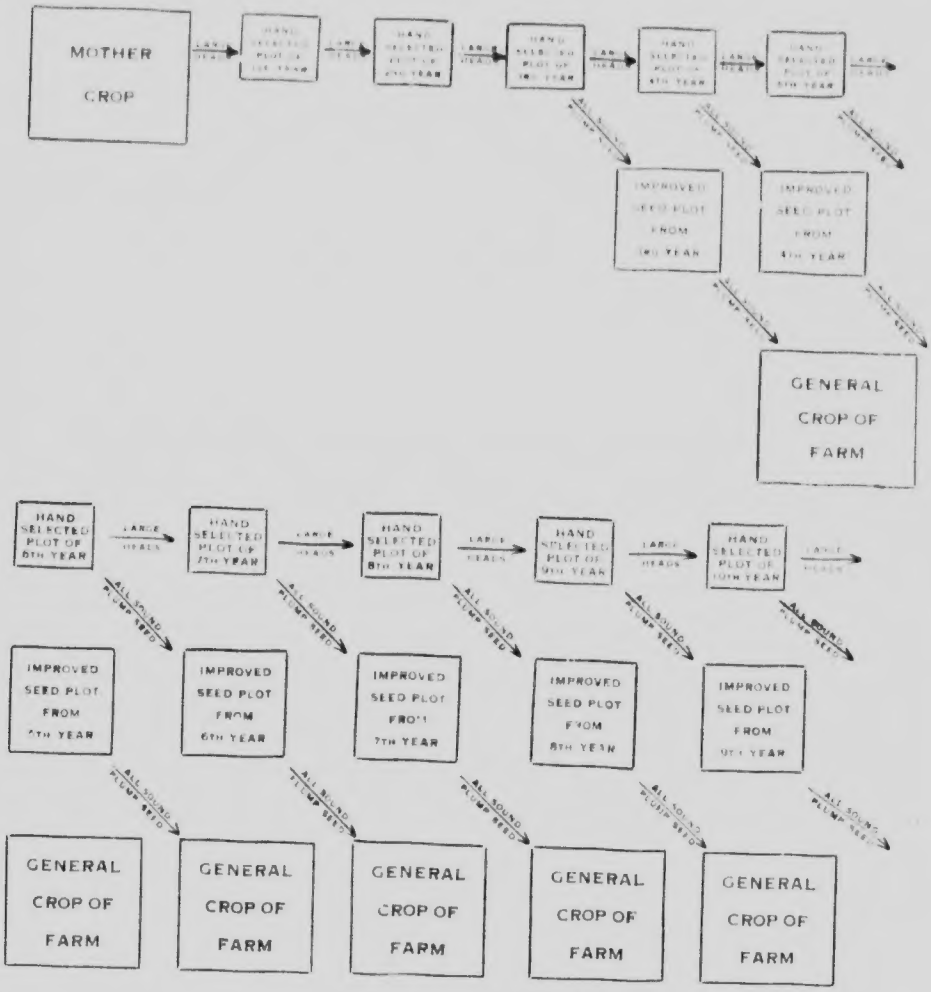
XI. Where a grain drill is used for the hand-selected seed plot, it is recommended that at least one tube in every four be plugged or closed up. That will leave space between every three rows of grain convenient for the reaper to pass along to gather the large heads from the most vigorous plants. There are also some other advantages from that practice.

XII. Farmers who are not in possession of seed from a hand-selected seed plot and who wish to join the Association as operating members for 1903, should secure good, sound, plump seed of a variety of good market quality known to be suitable to the locality, and, if possible, from a crop which gave a heavy yield. From the crop produced from such seed, on a specially prepared plot sown as recommended, the heads from the largest and most vigorous plants would be selected by hand this season for the hand-selected seed plot of the first year, to be grown in 1904.

XIII. The members of the Macdonald-Robertson Seed Growers' Association are not required to pay any fees, or to undertake any obligation to contribute to the expenses necessary for managing the work connected with the organization.

XIV. It is desirable that the membership of the Association be not too large at first. It is to be borne in mind that at the present time most farmers do not appreciate the value of selected seeds ; and as seed grain improved by a system of hand-selection cannot be produced at the same cost as grain grown and sold for food purposes, it will be prudent to push the growth of the Association only in keeping with the growth of demand for registered seed. However, a limited number of operating members from every county is desired.

Applications for membership should be addressed to the Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.



JAS. W. ROBERTSON.

Cut off at this line. In a closed envelope it will be carried free by mail.

Dated ..... 190..

at .....

To Jas. W. Robertson,
Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying,
Ottawa, Ont.

Sir,—I hereby apply for membership in the Macdonald-Robertson Seed Growers' Association. I intend to operate a seed plot or plots in accordance with the rules and regulations of said Association.

Please write clearly. } Name.....

Post office.....

.....

The farm on which the seed plot will be is,

Lot .....

Township of .....

County of .....

Province of .....